



Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services **Proprietary Purchase Justification**

Government Code §2155.067 requires a written justification for proprietary purchases to explain the need for the proprietary specification, and a statement explaining the reason competing products are not satisfactory.

Contact Information

Requestor Name: Pearl De La Cruz	Telephone Number: (956) 661-0963
Office Name: TWC Vocational Rehab Services-Blind Division	Department ID: 2321
Intermediate Supervisor Name: Mr. Ralph Rangel	Telephone Number: (956) 366-3601
Office Name: Harlingen Regional Office-Blind Division	Position: VR Transition Counselor

Purchase Description

Membership Purchase? (Type X to select) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Requisition Number:
Description: 6- 9 month Residential Vocational Rehab training facility period at Louisiana Center for the Blind.	
Vendor ID Number: 1-721111052-7	Estimated Cost: \$32,400(\$7,200VR/\$25,200PRE-ETS funds)
Provider Name: Louisiana Center for the Blind	

Justification

Essential Needs Met by the Proprietary Specification:

Customer Salvador has requested to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind in Ruston, LA. Customer feels that Louisiana Center for the Blind would provide a more one to one training to his individual needs as he feels more comfortable; as it resembles his community in his home town. The Louisiana Center for the Blind- Full training curriculum includes Braille, cane travel, computer literacy/keyboarding, home management, industrial arts, independent living skills, seminar, job development and college placement, and standardized test preparation. All classes emphasize the development of self-confidence and a positive attitude toward blindness. On average, the Center services approximately thirty students in the general program. Throughout their training, students live in apartments located eight blocks from the classroom facility. Customers are housed in apartments and must find their own way to and from class as if they were attending a class at college or training that would put them more in realistic type of setting. The Louisiana Center for the Blind customer is responsible for shopping, preparing, and cooking their own meals and maintaining their own apartment. The Louisiana Center provides students to put what they learn into practice right away in the real world setting. The apartment type of setting allows customer to practice daily home management skills, utilizing orientation mobility in the community as they would do for employment purposes, and they help customers learn how to maintain and manage a clean home environment.

Reason(s) Competing Products Are Unsatisfactory:

Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) is a residential dormitory style facility that houses the customers on the same grounds as all the trainings. At CCRC Students live at the same location where classes are being taught, customers only have to walk through the hallway to attend their classroom training thus not allowing them to utilize extensive orientation mobility skills similar to college or training in a realistic type of setting. Customers at CCRC are taught home management skills in class room setting however customers are not utilizing these skills daily

due to the cafeteria style dining room they have for customers. The customer does not have to shop for their own food, nor utilize travel safety to and from the grocery store to prepare their meals. CCRC is unacceptable due to restrictive training. He also does not want to attend CCRC as he feels that he will not be successful due to him not being able to apply the skills learned right away in a home and real world environment as he would do at LCB. At LCB customer can put his training into practice right away.

Approval

Based on the justification information provided, I authorize the procurement of the goods and/or services described in Purchase Description section from the provider listed in the same section.

Consumer Procurement and Client Services Contracting Authorizing Signature:

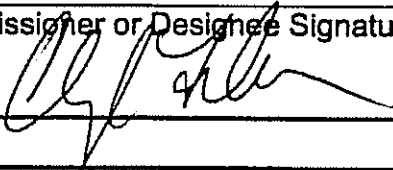
Date:

X

Commissioner or Designee Signature:

Date:

X



5/31/17

CPCSC Use Only

Purchase Order or Contract Number:

PO Issue Date:

Purchaser:

Justification for PROPRIETARY and/or SOLE SOURCE Purchase

This form is required when requesting a proprietary or sole source purchase greater than \$5000. This form is not required for publications or software available solely from the publisher or when an agency uses funds to provide training and education for staff as long as the training or education is related to the duties or prospective duties of the employee (656.044, Gov't Code). The form is designed for electronic completion and approvals may be obtained through email to the appropriate agency Commissioner (or designee). Submit the form with approval email as an attachment to the HHSAS

1. Contact Information

HHS Agency: **TWC** Program/Dept./Division: **Transition Program/
Blind Services Division**

Contact Name: **Pearl De La Cruz , VR Transition Counselor**

Telephone Number: **956-661-0963**

2.1 Complete this section as justification for a Proprietary Purchase:

Proprietary goods or services are manufactured or offered under exclusive rights of ownership, including rights under patent, copyright or trade secret law. A good or service is proprietary if it has a distinctive feature or characteristic which is not shared or provided by competing or similar goods or services. A proprietary good or service may be available from more than one source.

a. Name of source (if known):

b. Explain the need for the proprietary specification (i.e. Define the required features available only by the item(s) or service(s) requested, and explain the need for each feature or function).

c. State the reason that competing goods or services do not meet your requirements. Attach supporting documentation or identify the statute, mandate etc.

d. ☐ Supporting documentation is attached.

3201900018

2.2 Complete this section as justification for using a Sole Source provider:

A Sole Source purchase is directed to a single provider for a valid reason. Examples include:

- Goods or services only available from one vendor/provider.
- A court order or other binding legal requirement directs the use of a particular vendor.

a. Name of provider (sole source): Louisiana Center for the Blind
101 South Trenton, Ruston LA 71270
Vendor # 1-721111052-7-000

b. Explain why this vendor is the only acceptable provider, what other providers have been considered and why other providers are unacceptable (i.e. using this vendor is based on statute or other mandate. Attach a copy of supporting documentation to the requisition.

Louisiana Center for the blind is a residential vocational rehabilitation training facility that serves adults who are legally blind by helping them learn alternative techniques to prepare for, find or retain employment, attend a college, university or trade school, and live independently in the community with skills learned and applied in the real world environment. LCB teaches personal confidence, positive attitudes toward blindness, and related adjustment-to-blindness skills, including communications Braille, English language learning, and technology – cane travel, industrial arts, home and personal management, and career development. LCB offers comprehensive training, which features a customized plan for each individual student. Customer Salvador has requested to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind in Ruston, LA versus Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. He has toured Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin, TX and feels that both centers are excellent but after much consideration he has stated that his decision is to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind and exercise his informed choice to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind. Customer feels that Louisiana Center for the Blind would provide a more one to one training to his individual needs as he feels more comfortable; as it resembles his community in his home town.

The Louisiana Center for the Blind- Full training curriculum includes Braille, cane travel, computer literacy/keyboarding, home management, industrial arts, independent living skills, seminar, job development and college placement, and standardized test preparation. All classes emphasize the development of self-confidence and a positive attitude toward blindness. On average, the Center services approximately thirty students in the general program. Throughout their training, students live in apartments located eight blocks from the classroom facility. Customers are housed in apartments and must find their own way to and from class as if they were attending a class at college or training that would put them more in realistic type of setting. The Louisiana Center for the Blind customer is responsible for shopping, preparing, and cooking their own meals and maintaining their own apartment. The Louisiana Center provides students to put what they learn into practice right away in the real world setting. The apartment type of setting allows consumer to practice daily home management skills, utilizing orientation mobility in the community as they would do for employment purposes, and they help customers learn how to maintain and manage a clean home environment. An estimated 6- 9 month training period at LCB depending upon availability of housing to begin August 2017 or September 2017. A 9 month period is \$32,400. However, the amount will be split between VR, and PRE-ETS fund. VR funds will be an estimated amount of \$7,200 and PRE-ETS amount will be an estimated amount of \$25,200. VR funds will cover housing, and miscellaneous Stipend (food & transportation); PRE-ETS will cover Training fees allowable.

Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) is a residential dormitory style facility that houses the consumers on the same grounds as all the trainings. At CCRC Students live at the same location where classes are being taught, customers only have to walk through the hallway to attend their classroom training thus not allowing them to utilize extensive orientation mobility skills similar to college or training in a realistic type of setting. Customers at CCRC are taught home management skills in class room setting however customers are not utilizing these skills daily due to the cafeteria style dining room they use for their customers. The customer does not have to shop for their own food, nor utilize travel safety to and from the grocery store to prepare their meals. **CCRC is unacceptable due to restrictive training.**

There are only 3 training centers in the United states that follow the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) structured Discovery model of training as it conforms to the following: Louisiana Center (LCB) for the Blind in Ruston, Louisiana; Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) in Littleton, Colorado; and Blind Inc. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The customer does not want to attend CCB or Blind Inc. as it is too far from home and the weather is very unpredictable. He also does not want to attend CCRC as he feels that he will not be successful due to him not being able to apply the skills learned right away in a home and real world environment as he would do at LCB. At LCB customer can put his training into practice right away. Based on consumers informed choice and the justifications Louisiana Center for the Blind will be the appropriate acceptable provider.

c. ☒ Supporting documentation is attached. Supporting documentation is required.

Note: Please see attached personal intent letter from consumer Salvador Villa Santos, Case ID: 1552247, CL# 5633, Phase: Active Services, Pre-ETS Eligible: Yes as letter depicts his informed choice of Rehabilitation Center (Louisiana Center for the Blind).

3. Approval

Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) requires approval by the Agency Commissioner or Designee with authorization as identified at the HHS Signature Authority webpage: <http://hhscx.hhsc.state.tx.us/admin/purch/SignatureAuthority.shtml>.

For electronic routing, attach this form and the email approval to the HHSAS requisition. If submitting hardcopy (fax or mail), use this section to obtain the required signature.

Commissioner or Commissioner Designee Approval

I have reviewed the proposed purchase and the content of this request and approve my agency's purchase of the goods and/or services using noncompetitive or emergency means.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Signatory: _____

Cheryl Fuller Title: Director for VES

4. Procurement and Contracting Services Approval

I have reviewed the content of this request and believe the purchase of goods and/or services described in this request meets the requirements for purchase by noncompetitive means.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Deputy Executive Commissioner, PCS

Printed Name of Signatory: _____

Procurement and Contract Planning Questionnaire

Attach this form to the requisition if the requested goods or services are being procured for the first time.

General Information

Requestor/Contract Manager:
Pearl De La Cruz/Gary Benner

Division/Department:
VRS/Region VI

Project or Program:
Transition

Preliminary Planning Information

1. Is the proposed procurement and/or contract for (check all that apply)

- ☐ goods (supplies, materials, or equipment), and/or
☒ services (skilled or unskilled labor or professional service), and/or
☐ deliverable work products (for example, data, reports, documents)?

2. Type of procurement or contract (check all that apply):

- ☒ Client Services ☐ Memorandum of Agreement
☐ Memorandum of Understanding ☐ Interlocal
☐ Interagency ☐ Other:

3. Describe the goods, services, and/or deliverables for which the contract is being proposed.

Approval to purchase Room and board, food, Transportation, and residential vocational training to customer Salvador Villa Santos for 9 months at Louisiana Center for the Blind, Ruston, Louisiana. Total cost \$32,400/ monthly total cost \$3600; Housing: \$590; Miscellaneous Student Stipend: \$210 (food & Transportation); Training Fees: \$2800. The amount will be split between VR funds and Pre-ets funds. Pre-ETS funds are allowable for Training fees.

The Louisiana Center for the Blind- Full training curriculum includes Braille, cane travel, computer training, literacy/keyboarding, home management, industrial arts, independent living skills (one to one assistance in personal grooming, apartment maintenance, laundry ironing, money management, and sewing), seminar, job development, Job skills training, vocational planning, work experience training, and college readiness training. Customers will also attend field trips to provide them more hands on trainings, and exploration. All classes emphasize the development of self-confidence and a positive attitude toward blindness. Customers may complete other courses tailored to their training needs in a shorter time once proficiency is demonstrated.

4. Describe or justify the need for the goods, services, and/or deliverables. This contract is necessary because:

Customer Salvador has requested to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind in Ruston, LA for residential vocational training versus Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. He has toured Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin, TX but after much consideration he has stated that his decision is to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind and would like to exercise his informed choice to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind.

There are only 3 training centers in the United States that follow the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) structured Discovery model of training: Louisiana Center (LCB) for the Blind in Ruston, Louisiana; Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) in Littleton, Colorado; and Blind Inc. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The customer does not want to attend CCB or Blind Inc. as it is too far from home and the weather is very unpredictable. He also does not want to attend CCRC as he feels that he will not be successful due to him not being able to apply the skills learned right away in a home and real world environment as he would do at LCB. Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) is a residential dormitory style facility that houses the consumers on the same grounds as all the trainings. At CCRC Students live at the same location where classes are being taught, customers only have to walk through the hallway to attend their classroom training thus not allowing them to utilize extensive orientation mobility skills similar to college or training in a realistic type of setting. Customers at CCRC are taught home management skills in class room setting

however customers are not utilizing these skills daily due to the cafeteria style dining room they use for their customers. The customer does not have to shop for their own food, nor utilize travel safety to and from the grocery store to prepare their meals. CCRC is unacceptable due to restrictive training. At LCB he would be able to apply his training into practice immediately. Based on consumers informed choice and the justifications Louisiana Center for the Blind will be the appropriate acceptable provider.

5. Is this good, service, and/or deliverable currently provided under an existing contract(s):

☐ Yes ☒ No Contract Number:

If yes, when does/do existing contracts expire?

6. Will the contractor have access to confidential information?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what is the associated risk level (see below)?

☒ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low

Risk Level

Type of DARS Data that Contractor will "Access" (Check all that apply.)

**HIGH
(Confidential)**

☒ Protected Health Information

☐ Personally Identifiable Health Information

☒ Sensitive Personal Information

☐ Medicaid Information

☐ Social Security Administration Form

☐ Federal Tax Information

☐ Criminal Justice Information

☐ Law Enforcement Agency Information

☒ Student Information

☒ Client Information

☐ Security Sensitive

☐ Payment Card Information (PCI)

MODERATE

☐ Intellectual Property

☐ Agency Information

LOW

☐ Federal Tax Information

7. Who is the DARS Information Owner (Program Area)?

Name: Ralph Rangel

Agency: TWC

Department: VRS

Phone #:

8. Who is the DARS Information Owner Designee?

Name: Pearl De La Cruz

Agency: TWC

Department: VRS

Phone #:

9. Are Electronic and Information Resources (EIR) required?

☐ Yes ☒ No

10. Will the vendor be a Business Associate?

☐ Yes ☒ No

11. Proposed contract start date:

12. Term of proposed contract:

13. Estimated dollar value of the contract: \$32,000

14. Estimated number of contracts to be awarded: 1

15. What is the funding source for the goods, services, and/or deliverables? (Check all that apply.)

☒ General revenue (state funds)

☒ Federal funds

☐ Appropriated receipts (for example, private grants)

☐ Interagency funding agreement

Comments:

Signature Approvals

Division Representative's Signature:

X

Date:

5/31/17

Texas Workforce Commission

A Member of Texas Workforce Solutions

Andres Alcantar, Chairman
Commissioner Representing
the Public

Ruth R. Hughs
Commissioner Representing
Employers

Julian Alvarez
Commissioner Representing
Labor

Larry E. Temple
Executive Director

DATE: 05/22/2017

TO: Mr. Ralph Rangel, Harlingen Field Director

FROM: Ms. Pearl De La Cruz, Transition Counselor –McAllen F.O.

RE: Approval Request for customer Salvador V. to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind

Customer Salvador Santos Villa will be graduating the end of this month, May 2017 and he has high goals for himself. He would like to attend Texas A&M at College Station in the Fall of 2018 and study Linguistics/Language Translation. Although his recent goal was to become a lawyer he feels that becoming a translator would open more doors to him, and will not be such a long journey of study. Salvador would like to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind in the state of Louisiana this coming Fall 2017. He is a very intelligent young man who was in the DBS Children's program for a number of years and was transferred to the transition program in 2015.

Salvador has participated in a number independent living group skills events provided by the agency. He is a member of the National Federation for the Blind and has participated in several of their state and national conferences. Salvador has participated in their STEM 2U Leadership Academy, has taught braille to other students in the NFB Summer Bell Program and at the South Texas Academy for the Blind. Salvador has also become a mentor to other customers of the HHSC Blind Children's program. He enjoys helping and teaching others. This past year he had the opportunity to present to a group of students at the Student by Students Technology Conference held at the Edinburg, TX Region One Education Service Center. Salvador provided information on different types of technology available for persons who are blind. Salvador is also very active in his High School ROTC program.

Salvador has requested to attend Louisiana Center for the Blind in Ruston, La. He was counseled regarding training at Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin, Texas (state supported/no charge) versus LCB (\$32,400 estimated cost per for 9 mo. period). Salvador toured CCRC on November 11, 2016 and reported that CCRC services and programs appear to be very good but after considering all related factors, he has decided that the Louisiana Center for the Blind program would provide more opportunities for him to be successful, long term, in the areas of independent living and employment.

Both Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC) and Louisiana Center for the Blind (LCB) are a residential vocational rehabilitation training facility that serve adults who are legally blind by helping them learn alternative techniques to prepare for, find or retain employment, attend a college, university or trade school, and live independently in the community with skills learned in a classroom setting type environment and applied into the real world environment. Salvador has provided the attached letter of justification, compellingly outlining his reasons for selection of LCB training over CCRC.

After discussions with Salvador and his justification for requesting to attend LCB, including client choice, I am in support of approving his request. The plan to pay the costs, after conferring with Transition Specialists, is to utilize significant Pre-ETS funds to cover the actual direct training services and general VR funds would cover the non-direct services including housing, meals and transportation.

Ralph Rangel
Mr. Ralph Rangel, Harlingen Field Director

Approved x Not Approved _____

Mr. Rudy Martinez, Regional Director - Region 6

Approved _____ Not Approved _____

Dear Mrs. Delacruz:

As you may know, I am currently a senior at McAllen Memorial High School. I will be graduating this semester, and I have been considering the next steps I need to take in order to be a successful blind person. With that in mind, I am providing this document in order to explain my reasons for requesting long-term rehabilitation training at the Louisiana Center for the Blind (LCB). LCB is a residential training facility, located in Ruston, LA. The center teaches its blind students the skills they need to become employable. These include: Braille, cane travel, home and personal management, industrial arts, career exploration, and computer skills. In addition to these classes, students participate in seminars designed to teach them that blindness is not an obstacle to success, and in activities that present them with challenges that allow them to learn how to use the skills they are being taught in a practical way.

Students who attend LCB are housed in apartments, and this allows them to begin using their skills immediately. The apartments are located approximately one mile from the center, in an area where students can access restaurants, groceries, recreation, and other shopping opportunities. Program participants generally walk to and from the center and to other venues throughout the city.

LCB has specific guidelines for graduating, and most students complete the program in six to nine months. Students who have residual vision are expected to learn using nonvisual techniques, so the use of sleep shades is employed for those students.

As part of my quest to make an informed choice about where to access long-term, adjustment to blindness training, I have researched LCB, and I have made an in-person visit to investigate the programs offered at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC), in Austin. After completing

my research, I have determined that LCB is the center that will provide me with access to the training I need to reach my goal of becoming competitive in both the workplace and in my community.

In order to clarify the reasons for my choice, I have prepared a narrative to compare the two centers. Here is that narrative.

LCB & CCRC: A COMPARISON

Living Arrangements

The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center is a residential facility that houses most students in a dormitory setting. Meals are prepared for students, and while a few students are able to graduate to apartment living, it is my understanding that there is no guarantee that will happen. Since students are housed at the center, all they have to do to attend class is walk down the hall. No substantive cane travel skills are necessary to attend class.

Students learn home management skills at CCRC, but they are not used in daily life because the center utilizes a cafeteria for most meals. Students do not have to put skills learned in home management to work while in training. Thus, they don't have an opportunity to practice in an environment where they are able to reach out to instructors when "how to" questions arise. It is not necessary for students to shop for their own food. Students don't have to travel safely to and from the grocery store (a great opportunity to use the cane skills they are learning), and they don't have to prepare food as they would at home.

Maintaining a living space, such as an apartment, is not a critical part of training at CCRC. While students must keep their rooms clean, they don't have the opportunity to maintain a normal

living space as they will need to do upon returning home. So, any cleaning skills taught as a part of home management are only used in a theoretical way, in class.

LCB, on the other hand houses students in apartments. Students must make their way to and from class each day, just as they would if they were attending college or going to work. This training environment represents a more “real world” experience since blind graduates will encounter the same situations in daily life after training is complete.

Home management skills are an essential part of the training experience at LCB. Students must shop for, and prepare, their own meals. This allows the student to learn how to accomplish these tasks in a place where instructors are available to answer questions and to give direction about how the blind student can overcome problems that arise during shopping trips, and when traveling to and from the store.

Students are also required to keep their entire apartment clean. Inspections occur on a regular basis, and apartment instruction is available to students if the need arises. Requiring students to manage this part of their lives helps to develop positive habits; increases confidence in their ability to keep a presentable home that they will feel good about sharing with neighbors, friends and, family; and offers an opportunity to network with blind staff and other students about what works for them. Home management is not theoretical at this center. It is an integral part of everyday life, as it is when the blind student moves into his or her own apartment or home.

The Training Environment

CCRC employs a number of capable and dedicated instructors. There is no doubt that students who attend this center can benefit from the programs offered; however, during my visit to

CCRC, I was given the impression that there are no benchmarks that a student must reach in order to graduate, and the use of sleep shades is optional.

Most of the instructors employed by LCB, are blind people who use the skills they teach every day. Students must reach specific milestones in order to graduate from each class, and from the program as a whole.

Students receive more than 8 hours per week of each of the core courses. Those are Braille, cane travel, home and personal management, computers/access technology, and industrial arts. Career Exploration is also an integral part of the core program, and the services provided as a part of this element of the program are tailored to meet the individual student's needs.

SUMMARY

In summary, I would like to attend a rehabilitation center that provides me with access to training in a real world environment that increases both my skills and confidence. After researching both CCRC and LCB I feel that I can make an informed choice about training, as the Rehabilitation Act allows me to do.

After undergoing this process, I believe attendance at LCB will allow me to reach my goal of becoming a blind person who is both independent and employable. I have made that assessment based on the following:

- LCB prepares its students to live in a home environment by requiring them to live in an apartment that is off site.
- Students utilize the skills they learn on a daily basis by shopping for themselves, traveling to and from class, and participating in activities designed to build confidence.

- Students are presented with challenges that take them out of their comfort zones. These challenges include things like: rock climbing, whitewater rafting, and cutting down Christmas trees.
- LCB employs instructors with specialized skills that will assist me as I enter college and the workforce.
- The structure of a curriculum that includes the need to meet specific milestones is in step with the way I learn. It also fits with the college model that I will be working under once I complete training. That is to say. Graduation from college requires that you take and complete core courses and specialized courses designed to prepare you for employment. The curriculum at LCB does the same thing. It mandates that you attain proficiency in each area of study by requiring you to hit benchmarks. You become confident as you hit those milestones, when you leave it is clear that you have reached a level of proficiency that will make it possible for you to do the job of functioning as an independent blind person.

In closing, let me say that I have high expectations for myself, and I want to participate in a program that will allow me to complete rehabilitation training with skills that will allow me to travel independently, use access technology effectively, and manage my home life just like everyone else. I believe the informed choice I am making will allow me to do that.

This choice is in no way a criticism of the services offered at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. Rather, it addresses my individual needs in a way that I believe will lead to my primary goals of reaching a successful employment outcome, participating actively in family and community life, and giving back to others.

Sincerely,

Salvador Villa